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Three Cheers For Our Friends!

It is amazing how kind our friends have been in response to our September appeal. In these days of hardship many have responded and continue to respond. As a result we have taken a new financial lease of life, and have good hope that if there is similar response to our December appeal, we may be quite solvent by January first. God bless you all. We have tried to write a personal note to each person who has sent us an offering, and with grateful hearts we have said many prayers for you.

The Philadelphia Congress

Two of our friars had the privilege of attending the Catholic Congress in Philadelphia, and returned with happy reports of the spirit of charity and good-fellowship which pervaded it and the timeliness and worth of the papers read. Father Joseph was one of the Congress preachers, being responsible for the sermon at the High Mass at St. Clement's Church on the opening Sunday of the Congress and for the sermon that evening at St. James' Church. Brother Anthony acted as one of the attendants of the pontificating bishop at the opening High Mass on Tuesday. The following paragraphs are a resume of their report to the community of the Congress.

The Grace Dieu Press booth, under the charge of two Extern Sisters and a resident tertiary from the Convent, helped to make the works of both the House of Prayer and the Monastery better known. Some printed matter relating to Little Portion was distributed. We wish to bear witness to the kind way in which both the authorities and the visitors at the Congress showed their interest in our Order.

Some points among many worth mentioning from the papers and speeches may well be given here: Doctor Gavin spoke of the fact that matters within our Communion are not as bad as they seem to outsiders. One instance is that of the standing of Religious Orders. They have no real official recognition (a vague canon on the subject does speak of a way of giving them diocesan recognition as private devotional societies on which the bishop looks with some sort of favor) yet without according them such official recognition, the Church takes them to her heart, and not only loves them but uses them at home and in the foreign mission field. That is, practically they are an important element of Church life and work. Theoretically the Church officially knows nothing of them. Thus many difficulties which appear when we theorize do not exist as realities.

Doctor Bell made a most stirring and helpful address, the tenor of which was the anti-Christian attitude today in all fields of life, and our need of standing boldly and bravely for truth and righteousness. Most of those present heard him gladly until he spoke of the religious prejudices which have broken up Christendom into rival and hostile camps. He said much repenting must be done before Church unity could come, Roman as well as non-Roman repenting, but because he suggested that the final organization of the Church might well recognize the pope as the chief bishop of Christendom, a number of people concluded that the Catholic movement is hell-bent for the demnition bow-wows, and ready to restore the inquisition and all the "detestable enormities" of the pope from which our forefathers were wont to pray to be delivered.

The news-hawks, ever on the alert for a juicy bit, seized upon this statement and made much of it in their accounts, knowing well that it would set many readers all a-jitter. And the gullible public, of course, nodded their sage heads and said, "I told you so."

Anyone acquainted with Doctor Bell and his theology knows how far from his thought was the interpretation placed on his words. But on the other hand, if any demonstration is needed of that wickedness of religious prejudice about which Doctor Bell was speaking, and the fears it engenders in otherwise sane minds, nothing more is needed than the reaction to his words. And it was a bit irksome to see the efforts which were afterwards necessary to soothe and allay the fright of those who had worked themselves up into a state of mind about it.

The idea that the Episcopal Church is

on the verge of submission to papal claims or the idea that the Roman Church wants us on any other terms than its own is preposterous. Why, then, get into a state of uncharity and worry over a purely academic question when there are matters of immediate and pressing concern for all of us? Let us, for example, repent a little bit of our uncharity, of our callousness to human need, of our lack of zeal for truth or for Christ's ideals for mankind. Doctor Bell's stirring address was a clarion call to just exactly this kind of re-consecration.

Doctor McClenthen of Mount Calvary, Baltimore, gave a most interesting account of the preparation for the Catholic Movement. He made plain that the Tractarians did not get together and say: "Go to, let us start a Catholic Movement." Rather it looked to them as though the Church was about to be destroyed by the action of the English Parliament. To offset this they embarked on a tract campaign to set clearly before the people the real nature of the Church as shown in the Prayer Book and other official documents of the Church. Their point was that the Church is not a creation of Parliament but that rather, as history, the Church's own constitution and all her documents show, the Church is a supernatural organism. That people everywhere reacted to this teaching by saying: "Of course! So we have always understood, even though in our own day it has not hitherto been so clearly put into words," shows that the Catholic idea was not new to people and that the Tractarians did no more than call out into action a latent belief.

The Catholic Movement, therefore, was the inevitable result of the Church's own inner consciousness of her divine and spiritual character. So much enthusiasm and zeal could not have been at once enkindled by the Tractarian appeal if the idea presented had been a new discovery. The Tractarians did no more than make explicit what was everywhere implicit in the minds of devout Church people. This interpretation of the history of the Movement was well documented to show its basis in fact.

Space fails to allow of any more references to the papers. But mention must be made of the spirit of friendliness and joy which characterized the congregations and audiences of the various services and sessions. Surely any stranger who happened in would have seen that the Catholic religion is a joyful and a friendly one. It was not the hilarity of a good Rotary meeting or a falsely stimulated religious fervor. It was rather the joy of Christians in the certainty of their faith and the dignity of their worship and the comfort of their religion. Such joy in a common religious experience could not but breed friendliness. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household" was exemplified by the fact that the most cutting criticisms were not from strangers but from two priests who share our Church privileges, but not our belief in them.

One of these criticisms is puzzling. Our critic said that he knew for a fact that a certain priest in Philadelphia had heard a confession in a parlor. Why this should be considered reprehensible I do not know, unless it be considered that the confession of sins is not the proper sort of thing to be done in anyone's parlor. The writer of these lines once made his confession on a railroad station platform. A priest who was changing trains at the point was the only confessor available before one of the great festivals. The writer has also heard confessions in sick rooms, business offices, steamships—and in parlors. What Catholic priest has not?

The opening Solemn Mass at which Bishop Ivins pontificated and the Presiding Bishop of the Church preached was, of course, the high spot of devotion at the Congress. God was very good to give us such an outpouring of worship in a great corporate fellowship of united believers with the Primate of the American Church present as our fellow-worshipper and as our teacher. His sermon was a brave one, well worth re-reading and pondering.

The great lesson the Congress taught was the foolishness of discouragement or fear. The lonely Catholic whose spiritual privileges are few and whose associates look upon him with disfavor naturally has many a dark moment. Let such remember the Philadelphia Congress at which the Presiding Bishop of the American Church assisted at Solemn Mass in cope and mitre and then preached a sermon in which he spoke as a Catholic to fellow-Catholics, and then doubt, if

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he can, that the Catholic cause is a lost one. A few years ago no one would have believed it possible.

Five and Ten Cents

Among the things which keep disappearing are the little kitchen utensils. Strainers, can-openers, large spoons, small pans, and the like, where do they go? Certainly we try to take care of them as we try to take care of everything which belongs to us, but go they do. Perhaps some of our friends wishing to make us a Thanksgiving or Christmas present but deterred by lack of funds would like to send us one of these articles, or the wherewithal to purchase them. While we are on the kitchen let us remind you that foodstuffs of any kind, sort or description are always welcome,

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Friary Diary

This time of year the grounds of Little Portion get their Fall cleaning. The autumnal incense of burning leaves fills the air. Besides disposing of leaves, the gardens must be raked over and the flower beds prepared for the winter, and any plants which can not stand the cold must be taken up and brought in to the cellar. Spare time or time that must be spared, is spent in fixing the gutters of the drive-ways, pruning the bushes and cutting wood for the open fire place at the monastery.

The annual St. Francistide pilgrimage took place as usual this year during the Sunday in the Octave. It did not prove feasible to run a 'bus from New York but a good number of people came in their own cars and a few by train. There was the usual fine weather with which all the pilgrimages so far have been blessed. The customary program was carried out. The Solemn High Mass after the arrival of the pilgrims was followed by a box luncheon in the summer house. After the period allowed for visiting and exploring the grounds to see the many changes which had taken place since the last pilgrimage, an outdoor procession of the Blessed Sacrament was held. Following this, Father Joseph spoke of his visit to England and his impressions of the English Congress.

Some two and a half years ago, a disastrous fire swept through the woods at the back of the monastery property, killing most of the trees. These trees are now being cut down and sold since they serve as a breeding ground for blight and disease. Fortunately the woods closest to the houses were not burned, so that they can still be seen in their original beauty.

When the winter winds begin to whistle about the monastery, the cells on the north side of the second floor of St. Joseph's House have to be vacated. We could not afford to have heat put in these rooms this winter. This means that we will not have room to accommodate more than one or two guests at a time. Two of the friars must still sleep in unheated second floor cells, even as it is. Before another winter, funds may be forthcoming for this and other needed enlargements.

Faith and water systems—what have they to do with each other? Some five years ago when installing our water system, we planned one which would be adequate for about twenty people. Now we have considerably more people than that and our pump is strained to the bursting point, in fact, beyond it. Its favorite time to break down, which it is now doing on the average of once a month, is at a late hour of night so that on arising in the morning we are waterless.

We then borrow drinking water from a neighbour a quarter of a mile away. For washing we must use the water in rain barrels until the pump is repaired. One of the last times it chose to break down, was the day of the St. Francistide pilgrimage. O that we might have had more faith to believe that our numbers would so quickly grow, that is, faith—and money.

Casting about for ways of greater economy, we decided to invest in the necessary tubs, boilers, wringers, etc., to do our own laundering. The equipment has already paid for itself and from now on we hope to save a substantial amount.

The Order has been responsible this fall for a mission at Milford, Massachusetts, and two retreats, one at Seabury House, Mendon, Mass., the other to a group of priests in Philadelphia.

In the coming weeks we are responsible for work as follows: November 12th, preaching and Masses at St. Andrew's, Astoria, Long Island, and November 19th, preaching and Masses at

Trinity, Woodbridge, New Jersey. Some time in January, missions at St. Saviour's, Old Greenwich, Connecticut. December 3rd to 10th, missions at St. Peter's, Hazelton, Pennsylvania, and Grace, Hartford, Connecticut. December 15th to 17th, retreat at Seabury House, Mendon, Massachusetts. Your prayers are asked for these important works.

Convent Notes

Our Sisters are conscious of a growing desire for a more hidden and contemplative life and are, therefore, trying to deepen the prayer-life at the Convent by withdrawing from some of the externalities which have proved a hindrance in the past.

The smallness, newness and poverty of our community have necessitated that we go slowly in developing our life. But some eleven years' experience convinces us that we know the lines on which our life should be moulded for the future.

Poverty prevents our building on to the present Convent and making adaptations which would facilitate our purposes. Fewness of numbers—our family now totals ten—necessitates that each nun be ready to do any kind of work on short notice, and this sometimes makes for distractions. Newness necessitates careful experiment.

However, we have decided to concentrate completely on what we feel God is caling the community to do, namely, the work of prayer. Two of our Sisters who have a vocation to an active type of the religious life are quite definitely giving themselves to the oversight of any activities of the community which are outside the Convent or the enclosure. In their role of Extern Sisters, they are making possible a fuller life of prayer for those who are called to a more hidden sort of life. The rest of the Sisters expect to leave the convent enclosure only at the call of real necessity or charity.

Visitors will probably notice no great difference when they come to the Convent. In the past our Sisters, except those who served as Guest Mistress, were always too busy to see much of guests. Hence guests were often of necessity disappointed in their hope of visiting with the Sisters. In the future it will probably be easier to have a brief visit with a Sister by arranging to see the one desired at the grille.

Tertiaries and others who are closely connected with the Order will be given opportunity to enter into its life and work. The spiritual bonds which unite them to our Sisters are permanent and sacred realities.

The difference from the point of view of the community is that, whereas in the past any or all of the Sisters might have her rule of silence and prayer interrupted at any time in order to look after certain activities external to the work of prayer, now the Extern Sisters are charged with the oversight of these things and will be able to give themselves to them, and to caring for the guests and their needs more fully and freely than in the past. The other Sisters will suffer less interruption in their part of the community work by this division of activities.

On the feast of All Saints we were happy to receive a postulant for the habit.

The Sisters who conduct the Grace Dieu Press announce that they have their Christmas cards for sale as usual and will be glad to send samples to our readers, or the fifty cent or dollar packet of assorted cards.

Third Order Notes

We are glad to report that our Third Order is growing slowly and wisely in England. A number have tried the Rule and for one reason or another have given it up. But those who are persevering give evidence of real earnestness in the effort to make the Rule a means of practical sanctification of daily life.

A meeting of the London Custody was held at St. Mary of the Angels Choir School at Highgate through the courtesy of Father Morse-Boycott during Father Joseph's stay there.

First there was a business meeting, followed by a conference on the aims and spirit of the Third Order. After tea had been served, the Holy Hour was observed.

We plan soon to send to each tertiary the "Roster" of the Third Order. We ask each tertiary to return the short questionnaire as soon as possible after receiving it.